584 the negotiations, which is partaken of in a hut, not outside. To this feast three or four friends of each side are invited as witnesses. When the beer drinking stage has been reached, the company sit round the [273] beer pot in a circle, and the provider of the feast takes the long hollow beer-sucker, puts the end provided with a strainer in the pot, takes a few sucks, and then hands it across to the other party with the invitation to drink if he agrees to a matrimonial alliance between the two families taking place. If the second party desires at the last moment ● [675] to withdraw he declines to drink, but once having accepted the invitation and completed the contract by drinking, it is as irrevocable as a contract can be. The children thus pledged to marry may be so young that the marriage can not take place for years, or the girl may be a child, while the other may be a man already married. The girl so pledged in this way is known in some parts, as in Asembo, as " nyar oseke," " the girl of the beer sucker," and the Luo have no stronger matrimonial contract. It is hedged about with potent penalties, 584 mainly magical, in case of any breach of the contract by either of the 789 parties pledged. But even this most binding of all binding contracts is not invariably kept. Occasionally a girl will not submit to the fate marked out for her, and if she can find a man brave enough to join his fortune with hers, they undergo a ceremony, the essential feature of which is the drinking of " medicine " called " manyasi." This is supposd to render harmless the evils which would otherwise befall them.

789 Women are by no means so helpless when bound to their husbands as many are inclined to believe. *In some ways* wives are in a stronger 593 position than are women in lands where magic is not believed in. Luo women have many weapons in their armoury, by which they can bring their husbands into subjection, or perhaps I ought to say, something like subjection. I cannot find that these weapons are resorted to frivolously. A woman has to be hard pushed to bring them into play. One of which we hear a good deal is a curse debarring cohabitation. It is very simple in operation. Striking her thigh with her open palm, the wife vows never to cohabit again. The striking of the thigh is essential. Once this is done dire penalties, sickness of himself and children, will result if the husband attempts to force consent. The fat is now truly in the fire, and the husband has to come to terms with his wife. When he has succeeded in mollifying her " manyasi," the medicine already mentioned, is drunk to break the curse. At this 241 stage of social development a belief in magic does serve the needs of 841 women in certain circumstances. She has powers in connection with agriculture which can be devastating. For instance, during her menses no woman must sow seed. In the family of a polygamist lesser wives dare not approach the " mikayi " or chief wife to share in the labour at this time. Such contact with the seed would prejudice the crop.